VIEWING THE WORLD AS AN ORGANISM

WORLD ORDER

Pacific School of Religion
Berkeley, Calif.

FEBRUARY 1938

MAN'S KNOWLEDGE OF GOD • • • • 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ

THE WORLD CRISIS • • • • MOUNTFORT MILLS

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD • • HUSSEIN RABBANI

SCIENCE AND RELIGION • • • • G. A. SHOOK

LIVING IN A SOCIAL WORLD • • • KIRTLEY F. MATHER

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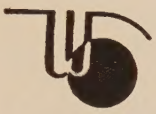

NEW SOCIAL PATTERNS

EDITORIAL

THOSE who would reform the world and help cause it to progress to a nobler and happier condition find a disheartening and potent obstacle in the cynicism: "Human nature cannot be changed!"

Human nature can at least be modified. And what is more important, the social pattern within which human nature operates can be, and actually is, continually undergoing transformation.

In a commercial-minded kultur, greed reaches its apotheosis of opportunity and reward. Incentives for economic selfishness lie not only in the lure of comforts and luxuries which wealth makes possible, but more strongly even in the social sanctions which glorify economic success however attained. Within such a social pattern greed indeed thrives, until it seems an insuperable all-pervading vice.

Yet we have evidence, in the study of other times and other peoples, that greed can be an outcast socially disdained and ill-flourishing. Indeed, within our own midst live a people who still maintain a non-greed pattern powerful in its conditioning effects. The American Indian has always prized the generous giver as the ideal citizen and looked upon the hoarder as beneath contempt. This social sanction given to tribal generosity has as deep a biologic urge as any urge that greed has. For among a primitive people where food supplies are scarce and haphazard the

very preservation of the tribe depends upon a certain communal sense of the equity and rightness of sharing, and the inequity of greed.

So dominant is the prestige of the "giver" among the Indians, even to this day, that efforts of the Federal government to improve the economic condition of Indian tribes in the west are met with the almost insuperable obstacle of Indian psychology.

If an Indian, by the exercise of energy and thrift, comes to have numerous possessions, the code of the "give-away" prescribes that he share these possessions with his less successful or less fortunate relatives and neighbors. Not to do this is to face opprobrium.*

Thus we see the extraordinary situation, that within a country where acquisitiveness wins the hugest rewards under which human society has as yet operated, there still exists a group in which greed is inhibited and non-greed is the necessary road to social success.

THUS it is proved that when the whole weight of public opinion, the sanctions of racial ideology and religion, and the influence of social leadership are exerted in any direction, action and custom are fairly sure to flow into this channel.

What we need, then, in the world society of today is a powerful public conscience and an example of leadership, giving honor to those who bring sheer benefits to humanity and dishonor to those who unduly exploit.

Such a public conscience is unlikely to be brought about by agitation on the part of idealists and reformers. The tide of social selfishness is too strong to be checked by such isolated efforts. What is required is a countertide of swiftly growing public opinion based upon spiritual convictions.

It is perfectly conceivable that under the sanctions of a world faith embracing fundamental principles of economic equity, a new social pattern may emerge in which greed shall find little opportunity and in which all the social rewards and honors shall go to solid and beneficent achievement. With strong enough incentives operative the emphasis of human nature can readily be shifted from greed to non-greed.

The more surely will this magic change take place, as world leadership comes to perceive the absolute necessity of such a "give-away" pattern, if universal and permanent prosperity is to be assured. The Indians practised tribal generosity because it was felt to be a necessity for tribal existence. When modern man sufficiently realizes that the economic salvation of society depends upon spread of income and possessions, the rich will willingly accept, to an extent never before conceived in a capitalistic society, a system of universal profit-sharing and of taxation-for-income-spread.

These, and even greater economic marvels, are implications of the New World Order of Bahá'u'lláh. The glorious future of human society will a hundred-fold compensate for the pain and travail through which humanity is passing today, on its unrealized way to the Promised Land.

S. C.

*See "The Give-Away" by Willard W. Beatty, p. 434.

THE ART OF LIVING IN A SOCIAL WORLD

KIRTLEY F. MATHER

ONE of the most gratifying characteristics of the American people is our indestructable faith in education. Despite all evidence to the contrary, we confidently expect that human resources, when properly developed and utilized, are competent to meet the challenge of the new age. Individually, we believe that intelligence must be capitalized to the full if we are to make our own lives as satisfactory as possible for ourselves. Witness the rising curve of enrollments in high school, college and university, winter and summer alike, as well as the swelling tide of interest in adult education in recent years.

Regardless of the particular courses of study offered by an institution of learning, it is obvious that the fundamental aim of modern education must be to help persons gain proficiency in the art of living in a social world. Not yet have we successfully resolved the paradox of the individual in society. On the one hand, our social organism has thus far failed to attain a pattern and a stature adequate to the needs of a complexly interdependent world, in which no man liveth to himself alone. And, on the other hand, few, if any, individuals have attained that maturity of personal growth which is prerequisite to unerring perfection of adjustment in thought and deed to the total human element in their far-flung environment.

This terrestrial planet of ours has not always been a social world. In my geological reveries, my mind occasionally harks back to the remote pre-Cambrian era when it was a lifeless world. For perhaps a half a billion years after the Earth came into existence as a planet circling the Sun, its surface displayed no trace of animal or plant. Then the first primordial plants and animals emerged from the slime of Archeozoic time and it became a living world. But for another billion years or thereabouts it was characterized by solitary rather than social life.

The first of the Paleozoic corals, for example, lived in splendid isolation and solitary grandeur, separated from each other in maturity by distances sufficiently great to guarantee complete independence for each individual. A little later, the corals became reef-builders, closely crowded together in certain favored localities in the Paleozoic seas, even as in the modern oceans. It cannot be said, however, that a coral colony is a social organization. There is no sharing of responsibility for the welfare of the

group, no assignment of special tasks to certain individuals in the crowd, no interdependence in the relationship of polyp to polyp. Each lives in close proximity to many others, but quite as blithely as though it were alone in a vast expanse of uninhabited sea.

EVEN so, for man. It is not the fact that hundreds of us live on any specified square mile of the earth's surface that makes this a social world. Other factors than mere geographic propinquity distinguish the human community from the coraline crowd.

I cannot announce, "without fear of contradiction," any particular geologic date at which social life first emerged from the antecedent pattern. The records in the rocks indicate that even as far back as the early Paleozoic period, four or five hundred million years ago, certain of the arthropods were accustomed to group life, wandering or swimming from place to place in more or less definitely defined assemblages. There is, however, no evidence that there was any real organization for activities which even by the widest stretch of the term could be called social. I doubt if the data will ever be available to serve as the basis for a doctoral dissertation on the sociology of the trilobites.

On the contrary, it is highly probable that the world had to wait until the advent of fairly modern insects, birds and mammals before it witnessed the first faint dawn of social life. That would give only a scant hundred million years, less than five per cent of the entire history of the earth, for the cultivation of the art of living in a social world. No wonder that art is even yet in its infancy.

Many and devious, however, have been the designs already sketched by various social creatures. Some are crude and some effective, but there is no doubt that the golden age, if any, for mankind is in the future not in the past. Like other gregarious animals, man must seek security for himself and his kind, but he must find it in his own way, not merely by imitating a way which has already proved successful for creatures whose heritage is different from his own. And in all probability the successful pattern for the social life of man will be something radically new, a design for living which has never before been sketched. Here as elsewhere the true artist is an adventurer.

But the wise adventurer not only has "a certain aim amid the peril of uncertain ways," he also takes stock of his resources and keeps an inventory of his supplies and equipment. It is with regard to this later factor that the geologist ought especially to be of assistance.

Some of the resources upon which modern industry and commerce depend are renewable, others are non-renewable. Renewable resources, such as water-power, soil, air and ground water, when properly used are not destroyed. They will be available in amounts far in excess of all present needs, as long as the earth circles the sun. Non-renewable resources, such as petroleum and coal, gold and iron, copper and lead, are in a wholly different category. The earth is a storehouse of such treasures; man removes a portion of the store each year; the

treasure-trove is not replaced, at last the storehouse will be empty.

Take petroleum as a typical example of the non-renewable resources. The petroleum of the United States will be exhausted in 25 to 40 years at the present rate of production—a billion barrels per year. The petroleum of the entire world will probably be exhausted in less than a hundred years, if present trends in consumption of gasoline continue. But already substitutes are available. Known processes of hydrogenation and polymerization are competent to produce gasoline, lubricating oils and fuel oil from coal and carbonaceous shales of which the known supply is adequate to meet the probable demand for two or three thousand years to come.

In brief, for each non-renewable resource for which the estimated reserves are less than a hundred times the present annual demand there is a known substitute available, and for most non-renewable resources the probable store is at least a thousand times the current annual withdrawal. Which is to say that Mother Earth is a very wealthy parent and our heritage of material resources is so rich, that there is actually enough and to spare of all the things that humanity needs for comfort and security.

THERE is, however, another question of basic importance. Our optimistic inventory was based upon contemporary needs. Will not the normal increase in human population so increase the demands that the storehouse will be emptied in a much shorter time than we had thought? The human population of the earth is today at least five times what it was two centuries ago. In less than 70 years, from 1870 to 1935, it has more than doubled, from about 800,000,000 to about 1,850,000,000. Will that trend continue? The answer is unqualifiedly in the negative. Without going into the many factors involved in increased span of life, decreased death-rates and decreasing birth-rates, suffice it to say that careful analysis of population trends reveals some very startling facts. Birth-rates in England and France are already below that necessary to maintain the present population number. In Massachusetts last year the point of balance was reached and the birth-rate for the first time was so low in relation to the number of women between 15 and 45 in that state as to provide exactly a stationary population, neither increasing or decreasing in number. For the United States as a whole, if present trends continue, the all-time maximum population, about 160,000,000, will be reached in about the year 1965. For the white races as a whole the data are less precise, but it is highly probable that the all-time maximum number will be reached near the end of the present century. Even less factual data are available for the so-called yellow races, but it is a good guess that their all-time high will be recorded during the middle third of the next century.

It would appear that unless there are radical and highly improbable changes in human nature in the near future, the population of the earth will never be as much as twice its present number. For all the people that are likely ever to clutter up the face of

the earth there is, therefore, an abundance of the material resources necessary to enable each and all to exist in comfort and security for thousands of years to come.

WHAT then is the excuse for a policy of grabbing while the grabbing is good, lest there not be enough to go around; of hoarding for oneself and one's nation against the day when Mother Earth's cupboard is bare? The real problem is not one of utilization, it is one of distribution. For the stores are not equally accessible in every land to every people. Instead they are unevenly scattered throughout the earth's crust, with great concentration of certain materials in limited areas. Hence, interdependence.

The fundamental question concerning the material basis of life in a social world becomes this: "how would you organize two and one half to three billion human beings so as to provide the most equitable distribution of resources, available in abundance but spotty in occurrence, in order that each would have his fair share of the things upon which the future existence of the human family depends?"

That is not an easy question to answer. One of the reasons for the intellectual chaos of the last few years is the unjustified alacrity with which many persons have leaped to conclusions concerning it. As Confucius said, long ago: "Study without thought is vain. Thought without study is dangerous."

Studious thought in this particular area requires far more than the gathering of accurate information; it involves the interpretation of facts, the appraisal of human motives, the discovery in advance of the consequences of contemplated action. From the analysis which is so essential in research, one must turn to the synthesis which is equally essential in education.

There are in general two, and only two, ways of organizing society for efficient and equitable distribution of resources, which have thus far been tried. One way leads through regimentation to the totalitarian state; the other through education to the democratic regime. The former was perfected by the social insects several million years ago and has worked with a certain degree of satisfaction among groups of human beings at several times and places during the last ten or fifteen thousand years. The latter way, which leads through education to democracy, has only been tried, and in a somewhat tentative manner as a rule, during the last three or four hundred years.

Organization of society according to the democratic pattern means group control of many phases of individual behavior. It preserves liberty, but does not confer freedom to behave in any way that anybody might consider desirable. Its essence is self-discipline. It involves the determination of policies and regulations by the group as a whole rather than by persons who have in some way seized autocratic power over the other members of the group.

Above all it insures to the opposition minority the right to express its opinions and voice its criticisms without fear of retaliation by those who represent the majority.

It is common nowadays to hear the statement that America must choose between the pattern of the totalitarian state and that of "true democracy," as though either of these social patterns is just as likely as the other to prove adequate for the future welfare of mankind. In my opinion this implication is entirely erroneous. It is not splendid idealism, noble unselfishness, brotherly love, which alone impel us to take the way that leads to the cooperative commonwealth of man. On the contrary, enlightened self-interest, intelligent consideration of the real nature of man, clear vision of all the consequences for humanity, drive us in that direction regardless of our emotions and our attitudes. I see no other alternative for man except catastrophic ruin involving his complete loss of leadership in the parade of earthly creatures.

Regimentation and the totalitarian state may temporarily promote efficiency in handling material; but they eventually stultify the human spirit. They may be good for man as an animal, although I am not sure that even this is true; they certainly are destructive of all those characteristics which distinguish human nature from animal nature.

"Life without industry is guilt. Industry without art is brutality," said John Ruskin. Regimentation approves the first part of that dictum; only democracy can protect us from the consequences of the second. For the greatest of the arts is the art of cooperative living in a social world organized on the basis of equality and fair dealing.

BROTHERHOOD

COSTES PALAMAS

(*Translated from the Greek by Theo. Gianakoulis*)

Miracle of miracles
Stirring within me while asleep.

Come, Brethren, come, we shall create a new religion,
An inexpressible religion,
Having something deeper than love,
Something greater than sacrifice,
Something more boundless
Than immortality.

THE WORLD CRISIS

MOUNTFORT MILLS

I. ITS CAUSE

"Crisis" is a dismal word. At best it means trouble; at worst grave danger. Yet it seems to hold a permanent and apparently necessary place in life's pattern. Both the biological and historical record show its dramatic presence ever reappearing in the evolution of organic bodies, from the microscopic to those vast complexes of States and races known as empires, even to civilizations themselves. A brief glance at these records may help us in our study of the world crisis.

It appears that in the lower forms of life crises invariably involve existence itself and that the threatened danger is grappled with under the guidance of instinct alone. Among the higher organisms, however, where self-consciousness and the reasoning faculty are developed the situation is far more complex. Here a crisis may center about the continuance of life or it may endanger only economic or other cultural values to which the evolving organism has attained. But in either case there is present the immeasurably valuable additional element of the rational faculty possessed by these higher organisms, their understanding, which is at their disposition in directing their efforts to meet the peril. Sad to say, too often this priceless aid is overlooked or roughly pushed aside and the emergency faced under the urge of the relatively blind instinct of the lower organisms, with results with which we are all too familiar. This, however, only strengthens the general conclusion which this brief review seems to justify, that all progress in life records the penetration of instinct among its lower forms, of understanding among its higher, self-conscious forms, to the true nature of the various crises through which these forms have passed in their evolving. Through this penetration lower organisms are enabled to make the adjustment to environment necessary to survival; the self-conscious, rational organism to meet and overcome all the staggering array of obstacles that lie between the world of primitive man and the civilization that evolved man has access to today. Conversely, along the entire path of this upward journey are densely strewn the tragic evidences of failure to penetrate to the true meaning of some crisis that impended, with disaster, often utter destruction, as the result.

These are, of course, simple truths, well known to all; lessons that science and history have long taught. But they are easily forgotten. They are brought to mind again here because it is felt that if ever their central truth—the imperative need of thoroughly understanding the nature of a threatening danger—should be vividly before us, it is at this hour when all mankind is faced with a crisis of a magnitude and capacity for wide-spread disaster never before equalled.

For the title of these talks,* the World Crisis, unfortunately is no exaggeration. Literally, the entire world is today heavily shadowed by black clouds that threaten at any moment to break, with a destructive force that may well sweep from the earth a large part of its population and, what is perhaps worse, leave those who may survive at the mercy of a savage tyranny barren of all those more precious values in human relationships which we call "civilization." That this danger is not imaginary nor the picture overdrawn must be patent to all who read the daily news. It was well summarized only last week in the opening address of the American delegate to the Brussels Conference. There Mr. Davis referred to the menace of these deplorable hostilities between Japan and China as threatening (these are his own words) "the breakdown of the whole machinery of modern civilization." This formidable statement received almost unanimous indorsement from the other delegates present, men, needless to say, who were there because of their expert knowledge of the facts of international life. The deepening gulf between the so-called Rome-Berlin axis and other European powers over Spain and the Mediterranean basin creates a situation in the West only slightly less alarming.

WISHFUL thinking may lead us to believe that these seemingly far-off events are no concern of ours; that we may, and should, turn our backs upon them and go about our own business, leaving these remote, troublesome people to fight out their battles among themselves. Not many years ago this might have been possible. But since then science and economic expansion have drawn the four corners of the earth together into practically a single unit and have created an interdependence among the nations that cannot be escaped. Quoting again from Mr. Davis' address at Brussels, as he happens to be the last to phrase this view now so generally accepted among students of world affairs:—"The day has long since gone by when the effects of an armed conflict are confined to the participants. It is all too apparent that under modern conditions the human and material sacrifices and the moral and spiritual costs exacted by the use of armed force not only fall as a heavy and oftentimes crushing burden upon the nations directly involved in the conflict but have grave repercussions upon all nations of the world."

The United States is one of those nations, and it is, I believe, a conservative reading of the conditions in the world today that, if this crisis which now impends is not squarely faced without delay and mastered by

*Three addresses given over Station WQXR, New York, on November 10, 11 and 12, 1937.

a thorough understanding of its true nature and the adoption of measures dictated by that understanding, suffering and misery on a scale and to a degree beyond our imagining will come upon us all. On the other hand, if it is so met, with courage and discernment, yes, and with restraint, there is good reason to believe that its dangers can be overcome, certainly their effects be greatly mitigated; and, further, the doors be opened to all mankind to advance into a higher type of civilization than the world has ever known. It is with this conviction that these talks are given, in the hope that they will help toward that penetration to a true understanding of the significance of these critical days that will make it possible to avert the universal catastrophe threatened, as such understanding has so often served to ward off disaster in past crises in man's evolution.

But where can we turn for such understanding? As the crisis is world wide so its analysis and remedy must come from an outlook equally universal. Obviously, too, to satisfy the need, this outlook must command a view unclouded by partisan loyalties of any kind, whether national, racial, political, social or religious. It must be fresh and completely detached; free, absolutely, to see things as they are. And it must be equipped with a vision that penetrates the depths and sweeps the heights of the human soul, and with a wisdom that can translate the implications of its vision in terms of the soul's experience here and now. Well nigh inaccessible though such an outlook appears to be, it is claimed that it is attained in the Bahá'í teachings.

In support of so great a claim only the teachings themselves can speak. Any other proof would be presumptuous. They cover an area bounded only by man's capacity to understand, but these talks, naturally, can touch only upon the fraction of them germane to our subject, and, unfortunately, upon but a small part of that.

The present state of the world was long ago foreseen and described in the Bahá'í writings. How accurately appears from the following passage, written during the third quarter of the last century:—

"Regard the world as the human body which, though at its creation whole and perfect, hath been afflicted through various causes with grave disorders and maladies. We see it languishing on its bed of sickness, sore tried and disillusioned. They that are intoxicated by self-conceit have interposed themselves between it and the Divine and infallible Physician. Witness how they have entangled all men, themselves included, in the mesh of their devices. They can neither discover the cause of the disease, nor have they any knowledge of the remedy. They have conceived the straight to be crooked and have imagined their friend an enemy."

And the cause of this sickness is disclosed in this further passage:

"The world is in travail and its agitation waxeth day by day. Its face is turned toward waywardness and unbelief. . . . The vitality of men's belief in God is dying out in every land. . . . The corrosion of ungodliness is eating into the vitals of human society. . . .

Such shall be its plight that to disclose it now would not be meet and seemly."

"The corrosion of ungodliness is eating into the vitals of human society,"—this, the Bahá'í teachings tells us, is the cause of the world's sickness.

And if this were all we might feel dismayed. For centuries the world has had this precept before it in one form or another. And to what avail! But there is more. Bahá'u'lláh, the Author of the teachings, from whose name (which translated means "The Glory of God") the title, Bahá'í writings or teachings, is taken, reveals this further passage:—

"Every age hath its own problem and every soul its particular aspiration. The remedy the world needeth in its present day affliction can never be the same as that which a subsequent age may require. Be anxiously concerned with the needs of the age ye live in and center your deliberations in its exigencies and requirements."

And from the depths of a love for humanity that abandoned for its sake all that this world most treasures, and joyfully embraced persecution, torture, exile and imprisonment, He explains these age-old words in terms of the "exigencies of the age we live in," that humanity may through understanding at last release itself from its long bondage to ignorance and prejudice.

He tells us that the force that is effecting this gnawing corrosion, in other words that is hurling nation against nation, prejudicing race against race, embroiling employer with employe and neighbor with neighbor, is none other than the creative force of life itself: that there is no other source of power in the universe. Yet, paradoxical though it may seem, He tells us that this force is essentially spiritual, and beneficent to a degree beyond our comprehension. How then could so benign a force bring about this confusion, these hatreds, this bloodshed, this misery, this socially disintegrating corrosion?

In this way, the teachings explain.

We, mankind, in our ignorance and, too often, in our pride, our self-sufficiency, have perversely challenged this resistless stream of power and set our puny wills against it as it moved serenely onward, in obedience to the law of its being. For the law of its being is the law of unity. Every atom of this force, sent forth by Creative Intelligence Itself, is charged with this single destiny, to create unity. Already physical science has made clear that its purpose has been attained upon our planet, where the waves of wireless transmission have demonstrated our continuous unity with all parts of the earth. And beyond the earth's boundaries we know that there is that in so-called space that holds the distant planets and the more remote celestial bodies in mutual interdependence. Unity exists for us in the physical world.

But we have failed to discern and understand that the influence of this force is not bounded by our sensory perception. This mighty law of unity is and ever has been at work as well in the areas where lie the soul's higher forms of expression, the realms of thought, of emotion and of the spirit. And here too it has achieved

its purpose. In those fields as well, Bahá'u'lláh teaches, unity and interdependence already exist. Japanese, Chinese, Frenchmen, Germans, Englishmen, Italians, Americans, Africans; all, though subjectively separated, are in fact one; interdependent members of one great body; separate organs of one organism. Yet scarcely an activity in our lives but runs counter to this fact, this law, this force that is fundamental in life; that never changes and is unceasing.

Every thought or policy of action, whether involving individuals, groups or nations, that has a sense of separation, of differing and mutually conflicting interests at its base is a direct challenge to this law. It runs head on against the solid wall of the force of life itself. Small wonder that the world is filled with suffering. It is as though a child persisted in thrusting his tiny hand into the flaming fire. Understood, the laws of combustion are benign and of infinite help to man. Challenged through ignorance, their destructive force is almost limitless. How stupid we should think the child should he persist in bringing suffering upon himself until, perhaps, he was destroyed. Yet, according to the Bahá'í teachings, that is precisely what mankind is doing. Bahá'u'lláh writes:—

"How long will humanity persist in its waywardness? How long will injustice continue? How long is chaos and confusion to reign amongst men? How long will discord agitate the face of society? The winds of despair are, alas, blowing from every direction, and the strife that divideth and afflicteth the human race is daily increasing. The signs of impending convulsions and chaos can now be discerned, inasmuch as the prevailing order appeareth to be lamentably defective."

The true cause of this world crisis is not conflict of political policy, or of social or economic theory; not denial of access to raw materials nor the exploitation of backward peoples. The crisis is due to man's own ignorant or prideful challenge of the law of unity, the Law of God Himself. This is the ungodliness whose corrosion is eating into the vitals of human society. No adjustment short of recognition and compliance with that Law and its Source can hope to save us from disaster, is the counsel of Bahá'u'lláh.

THE ART OF TRANQUILLITY

ORCELLA REXFORD

"If the heart becometh absolutely tranquil, suspicion and imagination will entirely pass away." — 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ

WE have in our present-day civilization lost the tranquillity of the Oriental peoples. In America, due to our adolescent eagerness to extract the supreme amount of experience out of life, we are in too big a hurry, we are too anxious to become great, famous or rich. We have too many engagements, too many things to accomplish and little time in which to get them done. This is most apparent in our large cities where life is speeded up. People are hurrying hither and yon with nervous tension, full of fear and worry that they will not accomplish their ends. No time to pause, listen and to consider what it is all about. "No time" is the plaintive cry of the harassed city dweller.

"The city is the world of bodies but the mountains and country are the world of the soul," states 'Abdu'l-Bahá. "All the people are toiling and laboring to attain the station of the rich man. Life to many rich men is nothing but a heavy burden. Instead of a blessing wealth becomes a great calamity to them. The supervision of their colossal fortunes and proper financial administration becomes the sole object of their lives. . . . Greed and selfishness become the dominant influences of their lives. Grab, grab, grab. In the mad rush and struggle for more lucre, for more worldly goods, they walk over the bodies of the toilers and the children. They become the embodiment of heartlessness and cruelty."

Tranquillity is spiritual poise which is obtained through long experience in the act of self-control and the mastery of living. It is not only a social virtue but a cosmic attitude, that comes to one who understands the meaning of life, and the divine order, who sees beyond time and space and who lives beyond the petty round of daily activities and gives them their true valuation. It is a most necessary virtue to acquire if we are to free the world of its nervous instability. This is a quality that needs to be reflected to children through the influence of the parents. If father has a "brain storm" when he comes home to a "late dinner;" if mother is "worried sick" over Johnny coming home late from school, then this untranquil spirit will dominate the

home and the serenity of childhood will be disrupted. But for wrong parental influences most of us would have been able to keep our spiritual poise, but it has its roots in childhood in the negative thought-forces which surround us.

Tranquillity is attained through long experience in the art of will power. Nothing is more attractive in a human being than the conscious power that radiates from the soul of one who knows tranquillity and this is only possible when one remains attuned to the Holy Spirit.

The untranquil person is a slave to his environment. He is annoyed and irritated by the circumstances of life over which he has no control. Noises bother him, the actions of people around him, having to wait for an unpunctual person, the delay in keeping an appointment, the tardy arrival of a train, disagreement of others with his point of view — whatever the cause, it is always due to resistance to the thing or unwillingness to accept the thing that causes the irritation. Selfish resistance to the circumstances of life wastes one's vital forces, takes one out of the divine influence and sets up distressing and exhausting conditions which have to be met and are worse than the thing which caused the annoyance in the first place.

TRANQUILLITY is not a negative virtue. Just as the surface of a lake may be unruffled yet within its depths is incessant activity, so the attitude toward life of a composed person need not imply a moron's development or utter indifference or callousness of disposition.

If one be willing to meet the circumstances of life with composure and intelligence, he has a better chance of mastering them than letting them master him. The easily-disturbed person is a victim of circumstances, a slave to them and must of necessity ever be miserable. If we accept the fact that life is in a stage of growth and imperfection and that logically perfect situations cannot be expected of every situation we meet we will have taken a big step toward the acquirement of this virtue. If we are willing that certain things shall not go as we would wish them, and are content to accept circumstances as we find them, over which we have no control, we shall be tranquil. It is folly to attempt to control that over which we lack control (circumstances) and to neglect to control that which we can control which is our *attitude* toward them. If we are willing to wait for the train or the tardy friend, to listen to unpleasant sounds and to drop the resistance of things that do not please us and to regard them pleasantly with a quiet humor and think of other things, we shall be in a better mood to deal with them successfully and to maintain our personal freedom.

The tranquil person through a well trained will has the light turned on in his soul and if some things in life seem to be contrary to his expectations, very well, then he can turn his attention to the things that do please him, the treasury of his thoughts. The only way to master circumstances is to be superior to them.

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

HUSSEIN RABBANI

THE existing world crisis, from whatever standpoint we may view it, is not only unique in its violence, but is also quite unprecedented in the far-reaching extent of its effects. It would be no exaggeration to state that there is no institution on the face of this planet which has not felt, in some way or another, the demoralizing influence of this universal agitation. No human organization can any longer claim to have escaped the tests and tumults with which mankind, whether individually or collectively, has now been seized. Our entire social fabric, in all its aspects, political and economic, religious as well as moral, is at present passing through a stage that may be well-characterized as one of the most critical and agonizing periods which humanity has ever experienced. From every direction we increasingly hear the voices of dissatisfaction, of threatening discontent rising vehemently in protest against the social evils which are ravaging the world. The masses are growing more restless every day, and with every fresh disappointment in their hopes they feel a stronger desire and a greater justification to break the bounds which have been arbitrarily and ruthlessly imposed upon them by their leaders. The wave of dissatisfaction is indeed growing and is acquiring such a momentum as to well-nigh overwhelm the forces of reform and of defence which the leaders of the age are assiduously devising in order to avoid or to attenuate the character of this approaching world cataclysm. Human civilization has been thus confronted once more with a universal crisis, and there appears to be, at least to many serious thinkers, no way for its liberation.

In the midst of this world-wide agitation and despair it would be well to pause and reflect upon the manner in which Humanity has, in former ages, met and successfully overcome the forces of disintegration with which it had been assailed. For this is certainly not the first time that human civilization has threatened to fall into pieces. There have always been periods in the history of man when the world seemed to have reached such a low ebb that no hope for its salvation could be any longer cherished. Indeed, the whole process of social evolution is but an illustration of the fact that social crises have always existed as an inseparable part of any plan in the development of the individual and of society. With every fresh crisis in the fortunes of mankind, however, man has invariably,

and as if through a mysterious and unexpected way, received a renewed capacity and vision to extricate himself from the forces of corruption and decay around him.

To an unprejudiced and thoughtful reader of history these periods of universal commotion which we term crises have been invariably characterized by an intense revival of spiritual forces which have, imperceptibly but steadily, crystallized into institutions that were able to eventually redeem the world and restore its fortunes. These spiritual energies have in every case been generated through the teachings and personality of a Divine Prophet, a Moses, a Jesus or a Muhammad, and were transmitted to the whole world through the instrumentality of His followers and of the institutions they had been empowered to establish for that purpose. The acquisition of those basic ethical and spiritual values which constitute the mainspring of every true civilization is therefore a task which the Messengers of God have accomplished. In other words, the only force which has rescued civilization, whenever it has threatened to disintegrate and perish, has always been that of a true and constructive religion. To illustrate this point one can cite as an example the civilizing forces which Christianity and Islám have released in successive ages but under widely different social conditions.

In the midst of the morally corrupt, politically agitated, and spiritually harassed society of the Roman emperors, the Faith of Jesus Christ appeared as a beacon of light of guidance and assurance, and gradually penetrating itself into every corner of the Empire dissipated the clouds of superstition, of fear, of spiritual restlessness, and material insecurity which had set such a deep gloom on the hearts and minds of all classes and peoples within its borders. In an ancient civilization tottering to its ruin the Christian Church was the only institution that offered stability, peace and progress. Such were the spiritual forces it released that in a relatively short period of time the whole Roman society was purged, purified and reinvigorated. Rome which had fallen a prey to the hordes of the Barbarians and had sunk to the lowest depths of decadence became once more the soul and center of the ancient world, and regained that universal supremacy which it had so incontestably enjoyed during the days of its consuls and emperors. It was, however, not the political Rome of the Caesars that had been resuscitated, but the regenerated spiritual Rome of the Church of Jesus Christ.

The history of Islám affords a similar parallel. Appearing in darkest Arabia, amid backward tribes that were morally degenerate and spiritually decaying, the Faith of Muhammad succeeded within less than a century in creating such a deep and widespread spiritual awakening throughout the middle and near-eastern countries and as far as Spain westwards that the entire Mediterranean basin was set aflame with the torch of civilization. Not only the unruly tribes of Arabia were united and civilized, but Persia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt, and the rest of the North African

countries were all stirred up, and each of them contributed its share towards the upbuilding of that great Muslim civilization and culture. The revival of learning, of trade and of industry which the East had experienced was gradually carried into the heart of Europe and led to that general reawakening known as the Renaissance.

One should well ask, therefore, why these religions which in the past have been the torchbearers of civilization are now no longer able to save the world from the forces of decay that assail it? Have they lost their vitality for ever, or can they acquire it anew and infuse it into the body of mankind just as they did it centuries ago? Can not the ecclesiastical organizations of the age, with all their numerical force and the tremendous material resources at their disposal, and with the influence of a long and rich civilizing tradition behind them, succeed in counteracting the disintegrating forces that are increasingly battering at the very fabric of present-day society?

To these challenging queries many of the ecclesiastical leaders have attempted to make reply, conscious as they are that they themselves, as well as the churches they represent, stand at the crossroads, that consequently the hour has come when they have to make their decision and to adopt any action that lies within their power to take. They rightly feel that it is no longer possible for them to maintain an attitude of silence, or of indifference in the face of the innumerable and pressing problems of the day. The religious organizations of the world have been indeed one and all summoned to meet on the testing-ground which the critical conditions of the age have prepared. They realize that the dangers facing them are too serious and too numerous not to be taken any more into account. And as if instinctively our religious leaders, of all sects and denominations, have responded to this grave challenge of the hour.

In the Christian world, the ecclesiastical leaders, as attested by their own official publications, are fully alive to the dangers with which their churches are beset. As a leading missionary of the Anglican Church has rightly stated: "The Church has a new danger to face in land after land —determined and hostile attack. From Soviet Russia a definitely anti-religious Communism is pushing West into Europe and America, East into Persia, India, China and Japan. It is an economic theory, definitely harnessed to disbelief in God. It is a religious irreligion. It has a passionate sense of mission, and is carrying on its anti-God campaign at the Church's base at home, as well as launching its offensive against its frontline in non-Christian lands. Such a conscious, avowed, organized attack against religion in general and Christianity in particular is something new in history. Equally deliberate in some lands in its determined hostility to Christianity is another form of social and political faith—nationalism."

It is not only the Christian Churches, however, that are suffering from this universal crisis. Islám, not to mention the other Eastern religious cults which have already decayed almost to the point of extinction, has

equally sustained a heavy blow from which it will perhaps never recover. For the very same forces which have been and are still now threatening to undermine the Christian ecclesiastical institutions of the West are at work in the East and are swiftly eating into the vitals of the present-day Muslim society.

RELIGIOUS institutions, in both the Eastern and Western lands, are indeed now passing through the most critical stage of their existence. Whether in the East or in the West, in the highly-civilized and industrialized nations of Europe and America, as well as in the relatively backward societies of Asia and Africa, the evidences of decline in religious organizations are apparent. People are by masses drifting away from their churches. Religious institutions of all kinds are being deserted, either through the impact of the forces of opposition from outside or as a result of a general deterioration in religious feeling. This decline of religious institutionalism is as universal as it is rapid and devastating. The bond of religious faith which, as history clearly demonstrates, has been the strongest unifying power in human society, has become so loose nowadays as to have for all practical purposes ceased to be of any effectiveness. The Church instead of healing the wounds that afflict the body of the world is itself subjected, perhaps to even a greater measure than any other social institution, to these very same ailments. Its leaders are anxious, bewildered, perplexed. Some have formally and definitely dissociated themselves from it, others are still clinging to only a part of its verities and standards, while still others are tenaciously attached to it, either out of mere blind fanaticism or because of some personal advantage or interest.

This crisis that has set in the ecclesiastical organizations of the age can be attributed to a number of reasons, but chiefly to two major causes: first, the increasing spread of materialism with its emphasis on the supremacy of the material over the spiritual, next the consequent growth of social, political and economic doctrines and movements which have resulted in undermining the loyalty of the individual to his church or religion.

The materialistic spirit which has, over many long years, been slowly developing under the influence of new scientific discoveries and inventions, and of continually expanding trade and industrial relations has undoubtedly brought in its wake a diminution of religious feeling. Man, through his discovery of the secrets of nature, has been so emboldened and his sense of pride has so considerably increased that he has been blinded to his own limitations and imperfections, and has vainly imagined to be able to dispense with even his Creator. The excessive growth of material development has had also the sad effect of distracting man's attention from the major spiritual problems of this life. Our utterly materialistic age has so much absorbed our energies that we have hardly the time or the necessary capacity to develop the spiritual side of our nature. The spread of this spirit of materialism which from the Eighteenth Century up till now has

been gaining ground has dealt the Church the severest blow it had ever experienced. In the East, where it has been of a relatively recent import, this materialistic spirit is spreading perhaps even more rapidly than it did in Western countries, and is exercising its corrosive influence over all religious institutions and groups.

The inevitable result of such a growth of materialism has been to lead the way to the formation of those doctrines and social systems which are now accelerating in their turn the process of religious disintegration through which the world is passing. The Church has suffered and is still suffering from the persecutions which the leaders of thought, whether in the realm of science or of human organization, are vehemently directing against it. Not only long-cherished religious verities are being flouted every day by the leaders of the press in every land, but religious institutions are increasingly subjected to a severe repression by the totalitarian governments in many leading countries, in both the East and the West. Under these odious conditions the Church finds the share of its influence definitely restricted, and its power considerably curtailed.

This wave of religious persecution is not only confined to any particular country, nor is it instigated by any special government alone. In democratic countries, as well as in those totalitarian states which are under the rule of either the communist or fascist dictatorships, the Church is being violently suppressed or brought under collective control. But in all these different political regimes the dilemma with which it is faced is the same, namely, to whom the Christian believer should give his final and supreme allegiance. In other words, all Church members are faced with a conflict of loyalties, a conflict between their loyalty to their Church and their loyalty to their government. For men cannot give supreme allegiance to two powers. Either the Church, as the agency of God and the repository of His laws, is supreme or the State is supreme. The Christian must give final allegiance either to Christ or to Caesar. If to Caesar, then he must accept the mandate of the State, and the Church would have necessarily to be relegated to the background, and cease to count as a living social force. An attempt has been made to find a solution to this truly insoluble problem by separating the Church from the State, and by setting each into a close tight compartment. But this has been a very clever way of avoiding the problem rather than solving it, and as history has clearly demonstrated this division of authority has been artificial, and instead of alleviating the dangers of conflict between Church and State has intensified them and created a series of fresh problems which both our political and religious leaders have so far been unable to solve.

The chief rival with which the Church has to contend in almost every country is the modern nationalist State. It is the ideals of modern nationalism which religious leaders find increasingly difficult to reconcile with both the spirit and the teachings upheld by their churches. No politi-

cal agreement has thus far succeeded in bringing into permanent, or even temporary, accord these two basically irreconcilable systems of thought and organization. In this perpetual conflict of many centuries old the State, and particularly the modern nationalist State, has at last triumphed, reducing thereby the Church to a definitely secondary rank, and placing it even on the same level as other organizations within its sphere. The Church has thus become a vassal of the State, and there seems to be no hope of its ever recovering the former position it enjoyed as the unchallengeable vanguard in the forces of civilization and progress in the world.

In addition to these outside attacks which the Church is sustaining there are forces of disintegration that are working within it, and these have to be given due weight in any analysis of its present-day position in the world. These inner forces of division are setting all ecclesiastical organizations into warring camps and are indeed partly responsible for the success of the anti-clerical tendencies of the age. Had the Christian Churches been so organically united as to present a common front to their enemies the latter could not possibly have succeeded in so violently undermining the basis of the Church order.

To overcome such a serious handicap some far-sighted religous leaders conceived the idea of organizing from time to time international conferences that would give various religious bodies the opportunity of coming together and of discussing in an atmosphere of fellowship their common problems. Many important conferences of this type have already been held since the Great War, among them the Conference of Living Religions held in London in 1924, the First International Congress of the World Fellowship of Faiths held in Chicago in 1935, and the Second World Congress of Faiths held in London in July, 1936. In addition to these conferences, a movement for the unification of all Christian Churches was formed. But all these attempts proved to be a failure. Religious factions have instead of diminishing considerably increased. Religious fanaticism and bigotry far from being stifled has been intensified. Paradoxical as it may sound, the closer the various religious bodies became physically the wider seemed to appear the gulf that separates them from each other. If there is any truth which these international meetings have brought into light it is that mere physical proximity cannot alone achieve mutual understanding and fellowship. There is some greater bond which is required in order to bridge successfully the age-long differences that have arisen between various religious sects. Our existing religious organizations have become too decrepit, too rigid and are too far removed from the spirit of the age to be able to unify and meet with one accord the manifold and challenging problems of the world.

The Church is therefore passing through one of the most perilous stages of its history. From within it is being deserted, nay even violently opposed, by its own kith and kin, while from the world outside it receives a series of successive blows from which it has no hope to recover. It has, like

all other religions that have preceded it, utterly fallen from the lofty heights which it occupied during the days of its Founder. Blinded by the material civilization of the modern age it has compromised its principles, and in some cases definitely allied itself with movements and doctrines that run counter to the very spirit of the message of Jesus Christ.

The Christian Church, if it wishes to remain faithful to its mission should indeed organize and lead the world, but alas it is now being led, coerced and even suppressed by its enemies, both from within and outside its ranks. It has lost its vitality, its purity and its vigor. To quote one of its official spokesmen: "If any one doubts the difference in the spiritual status of the early Church and the Church of today he needs but to ask himself where there are now to be found groups of Christians possessing that elevation of consciousness and that divine realization which would enable them to march with songs of triumph into the arena to be mangled by ferocious beasts. Individuals yes, but among our hundreds of millions of professing Christians, where do we find them in whole communities?"[1]

Irrespective of the attacks which the Christian Church is sustaining from within and from without, and which have all resulted in sapping its vitality, it should be frankly confessed that its whole doctrinal and institutional system is in itself incapable of providing the necessary solution to the complex and ever-growing problems that confront present-day society. The teachings of Jesus Christ, aside from the fact that they have been corrupted and adulterated through contact with pagan and materialistic philosophies, are in themselves too simple, too fragmentary to meet the growing social needs and requirements of our age. The Gospel of Jesus, which it should be well admitted, constitutes an advance on the ordinances and teachings of the Old Testament, is obviously too rudimentary and is quite insufficient for the needs of the modern world, even as were the teachings of the Hebrew prophets insufficient for Jesus' day. While we should acknowledge the truth, beauty and uplifting power of the religion of Jesus Christ, we cannot but recognize its inadequacy as a civilizing force in our highly industrialized and complicated social order. The economic and industrial problems, the political and moral questions of national and international character which are baffling our present-day leaders could not possibly arise in the relatively primitive society in which Jesus appeared. So, His gospel had to be necessarily confined to the enunciation of certain moral precepts which today cannot become effective unless considerably supplemented and enriched by the experience which mankind has gathered during the lapse of nearly two thousand years since His appearance. To give but an instance, the Christian teachings on ethics, as embodied in the Gospel, do not and were never intended to cover the whole of the moral life—social, national and international—but only the life of the individual. The ethics of the Gospel is thus fundamentally individualistic, and cannot consequently offer the modern world the new moral values

1—World Fellowship, pp. 103-104.

and standards it requires.

If the Christian Church, to mention only one of the chief ecclesiastical organizations of the day, is for the reasons that have been already stated impotent to check back the forces of disintegration that are sweeping the world, what force then can rescue and redeem mankind, and lead it again on the path of progress? Will it be the power of statesmanship, or will it be again, as in previous ages, the power of a new and world-embracing religious faith?

THE Bahá'ís, who view history as "an epic written by the finger of God and proceeding along an ordered course to a climax," who interpret historical events as a part of a universal plan which the Almighty is, through the instrumentality of His prophets and messengers, gradually unfolding to the eyes of men, refuse to share the materialistic and deterministic conceptions of those philosophers and economists who consider human history as an accidental display of conflicting forces operating in society. They confidently assert their belief in the utter inadequacy of any man-made system to restore the fortunes of our distracted age, and proclaim the necessity for a fresh Revelation to accomplish such a truly gigantic task. They are convinced that "no scheme which the calculations of the highest statesmanship may yet devise; no doctrine which the most distinguished exponents of economic theory may hope to advance; no principle which the most ardent of moralists may strive to inculcate, can provide, in the last resort, adequate foundations upon which the future of a distracted world can be built."[2]

Almost seventy years ago in a Tablet He addressed to Queen Victoria, Bahá'u'lláh emphasized that very same truth: "That which the Lord hath ordained as the sovereign remedy and mightiest instrument for the healing of all the world is the union of all its peoples in one universal Cause, one common Faith. This can in no wise be achieved except through the power of a skilled, an all-powerful and inspired Physician. This, verily, is the truth, and all else naught but error."

It is, therefore, religion which in the last resort can save the world from complete breakdown. It is not science, whether economic, moral or political, which can accomplish this task, but only the influence and power which a world-embracing religious system can create. It is thus upon the Church, and not the State, that devolves the supreme task of rescuing the world; but a Church which has the catholicity, the purity and the youthful vigor of the early Churches, whether of the Christian, Muhammadan or other religious Dispensations; a Church which seeks to establish upon earth the Government of God, and thus usher in His Divine Kingdom. Such a Divine Polity is humanity's sole hope of salvation.

The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh is precisely that very same Divine Polity which the world now requires. Just as in previous ages and centuries the world was rescued by a Moses, Buddha, Zoroaster, Jesus and Muhammad, so today God, faithful to His pledged, has bequeathed to mankind a

2—Shoghi Effendi, "The Goal of a New World Order," p. 14.

new Messenger with the mission of guiding and stirring on the ship of humanity amidst the tempestuous winds of the age.

The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh is destined to play essentially that very same rôle which the Churches and organizations of previous Dispensations have played, with that basic difference, however, that unlike them all, this new World Order of God has a wholeness, an integrity and a guidance which no religious system has ever possessed, and has consequently an incalculable power to shape and direct the destinies of mankind over a considerably long and uninterrupted period.

INDEED, for the first time in the history of religions we have from a Prophet of God clear, explicit, detailed and written directions regarding the administration of His Faith. Neither Christianity, nor even Islám, which compared to all the Dispensations that have preceded it marks already a step in advance in social and administrative matters, can claim to have as detailed and authoritative a system of administration as the Bahá'í Faith. "Unlike the Dispensation of Christ, unlike the Dispensation of Muhammad, unlike all the Dispensations of the past, the apostles of Bahá'u'lláh in every land, wherever they labor and toil have before them in clear, in unequivocal and emphatic language, all the laws, the regulations, the principles, the institutions, the guidance they require for the prosecution and consummation of their task. Both in the administrative provisions of the Bahá'í Dispensation, and in the matter of succession, as embodied in the twin institutions of the House of Justice and of the Guardianship, the followers of Bahá'u'lláh can summon to their aid such irrefutable evidences of Divine guidance that none can resist, that none can belittle or ignore. Therein lies the distinguishing feature of the Bahá'í Revelation. Therein lies the strength of the unity of the Faith, of the validity of a Revelation that claims not to destroy or belittle previous Revelations, but to connect, unify and fulfil them."[3]

The Faith of Bahá'u'lláh, His followers believe, is therefore the sole effective panacea for the ills that afflict and are increasingly afflicting the body politic. It is the ark of salvation which the Almighty has once more sent down from the heaven of His bounty for the redemption of mankind. It does not only reveal to man a new vision of his future destiny. Nor does it simply set down before him some spiritual principles and uplifting moral standards. It offers something more tangible, more definite and constructive than all that; it offers a plan of action, and also releases at the same time such spiritual energies that would make such a plan capable of realization. For without an atmosphere of spirituality no plan of social reconstruction can become effective and endure.

The genius of the Religion of Bahá'u'lláh consists indeed in that it possesses, to a far greater measure than any previous religious Dispensation and than any existing social system those elements, both spiritual and administrative, which when harmoniously combined and effectively put in-

3—Shoghi Effendi, "The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh—Further Considerations," pp. 9-10.

to operation can regenerate society and insure its steady development. "For Bahá'u'lláh has not only imbued mankind with a new and regenerating spirit. He has not merely enunciated certain universal principles, or propounded a particular philosophy, however potent, sound and universal these may be. In addition to these He, as well as 'Abdu'l-Bahá after Him, have, unlike the Dispensations of the past, clearly and specifically laid down a set of Laws, established definite institutions, and provided for the essentials of a Divine Economy. These are destined to be a pattern for future society, a supreme instrument for the establishment of the Most Great Peace, and the one agency for the unification of the world, and the proclamation of the reign of righteousness and justice upon the earth."[4]

4—Ibid, p. 7.

The third article in a symposium on the subject of The World Outlook.

JERUSALEM, the Holy of Holies, is a revered Temple, a sublime name, for it is the City of God. . . . The gathering of Israel at Jerusalem means, therefore, and phophecies that Israel as a whole is gathering beneath the banner of God and will enter the Kingdom of the Ancient of Days. For the celestial Jerusalem, which has at its center the Holy of Holies, is a City of the Kingdom, a divine City.

Moreover, materially as well (as spiritually), the Israelites will all gather in the Holy Land. This is irrefutable prophecy, for the ignominy which Israel has suffered for well nigh twenty-five hundred years will now be changed into eternal glory, and in the eyes of all, the Jewish people will become glorified to such an extent as to draw the jealousy of its enemies and the envy of its friends.—'ABDU'L-BAHÁ (in the year 1897).

MAN'S KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

'ABDU'L-BAHÁ

Question—To what extent can the understanding of man comprehend God?

Answer—This subject requires ample time, and to explain it thus at table is not easy; nevertheless we will speak of it briefly.

KNOW that there are two kinds of knowledge: the knowledge of the essence of a thing, and the knowledge of its qualities. The essence of a thing is known through its qualities, otherwise it is unknown and hidden.

As our knowledge of things, even of created and limited things, is knowledge of their qualities and not of their essence, how it is possible to comprehend in its essence the Divine Reality, which is unlimited? For the substance of the essence of anything is not comprehended, but only its qualities. For example, the substance of the sun is unknown, but is understood by its qualities, which are heat and light. The substance of the essence of man is unknown and not evident, but by its qualities it is characterized and known. Thus everything is known by its qualities and not by its essence. Although the mind encompasses all things, and the outward beings are comprehended by it, nevertheless these beings with regard to their essence are unknown; they are only known with regard to their qualities.

Then how can the eternal everlasting Lord, who is held sanctified from comprehension and conception, be known by His essence? That is to say, as things can only be known by their qualities and not by their essence, it is certain that the Divine Reality is unknown with regard to its essence, and is known with regard to its attributes. Besides, how can the phenomenal reality embrace the Pre-existent Reality? For comprehension is the result of encompassing—embracing must be, so that comprehension may be—and the Essence of Unity surrounds all, and is not surrounded.

Also the difference of conditions in the world of beings is an obstacle to comprehension. For example: this mineral belongs to the mineral kingdom; however far it may rise, it can never comprehend the power of growth. The plants, the trees, whatever progress they may make, cannot conceive of the power of sight or the powers of the other senses; and the animal cannot imagine the condition of man, that is to say, his spiritual powers. Difference of condition is an obstacle to knowledge; the inferior

degree cannot comprehend the superior degree. How then can the phenomenal reality comprehend the Pre-existent Reality? Knowing God, therefore, means the comprehension and the knowledge of His attributes, and not of His Reality. This knowledge of the attributes is also proportioned to the capacity and power of man; it is not absolute. Philosophy consists in comprehending the reality of things as they exist, according to the capacity and the power of man. For the phenomenal reality can comprehend the Pre-existent attributes only to the extent of the human capacity. The mystery of Divinity is sanctified and purified from the comprehension of the beings, for all that comes to the imagination is that which man understands, and the power of the understanding of man does not embrace the Reality of the Divine Essence. All that man is able to understand are the attributes of Divinity, the radiance of which appears and is visible in worlds and souls.

When we look at the worlds and the souls, we see wonderful signs of the divine perfections, which are clear and apparent; for the reality of things proves the Universal Reality. The Reality of Divinity may be compared to the sun, which from the height of its magnificence shines upon all the horizons, and each horizon, and each soul, receives a share of its radiance. If this light and these rays did not exist, beings would not exist; all beings express something, and partake of some ray and portion of this light. The splendors of the perfections, bounties, and attributes of God shine forth and radiate from the reality of the Perfect Man, that is to say the Unique One, the universal Manifestation of God. Other beings receive only one ray, but the universal Manifestation is the mirror for this Sun, which appears and becomes manifest in it, with all its perfections, attributes, signs and wonders.

The knowledge of the Reality of the Divinity is impossible and unattainable, but the knowledge of the Manifestations of God is the knowledge of God, for the bounties, splendors, and divine attributes are apparent in them. Therefore if man attains to the knowledge of the Manifestations of God, he will attain to the knowledge of God; and if he be neglectful of the knowledge of the Holy Manifestation, he will be bereft of the knowledge of God. It is then ascertained and proved that the Holy Manifestations are the center of the bounty, signs, and perfections of God. Blessed are those who receive the light of the divine bounties from the enlightened Dawning-points!

We hope that the Friends of God, like an attractive force, will draw these bounties from the source itself, and that they will arise with such illumination and signs that they will be evident proofs of the Sun of Reality.

PHILOSOPHY AND REVELATION

G. A. SHOOK

II. THE REAL CONFLICT BETWEEN SCIENCE AND RELIGION

THE historians who have written on the conflict of science and religion have invariably shown that the church exhibited a mental inertia which always prevented it from facing, what to our modern way of thinking, were perfectly obvious facts. These historians do not indicate, however, why this reticence persisted through the middle ages and we are prone to believe that religion must necessarily be in opposition to science. Perhaps the real difficulty should be attributed to the fact that science introduced a new way of thinking which was contrary to the classical theory of knowledge.

Science had its inception in a world in which thinking was elevated above doing, even the kind that might aid thinking. In this atmosphere the highest and most perfect knowledge was free from the world of matter.

Let us see why the mind, freed from all experience with external objects, should lead us to ultimate reality, universal truth. A very simple illustration may indicate the origin of this classical tradition concerning the validity of the mind. By means of common drawing instruments one might discover most of the propositions in geometry, but he would never be absolutely sure of any of them. By measurement we might show that if a triangle has two equal sides the angles opposite the equal sides are equal. One might try it for a number of cases and assume that it would hold for all others. It looks reasonable but we are not absolutely sure for there is always an error in every physical measurement. If we prove the proposition formally by logic rather than by measurement then we are reasonably sure that it will hold for all cases.

In the realm of mathematics which is purely rational knowledge, the mind needs very few tools. A pointed stick and some sand will answer. Ostensibly then, its progress does not depend upon any kind of experimentation, it can be developed without reference to material objects. In fact, some philosophers maintain that it would have advanced had there been no practical use for it. To the ancient philosopher there were other kinds of knowledge, not purely rational, that could be acquired without experimental investigation. If we look about us in nature and observe carefully, we can make considerable

progress as did the Greeks, nevertheless, as we all know, without controlled experiments we would require centuries to obtain as much information as we now obtain in a single day with apparatus and laboratory technique. But that is not all. We would probably not make much progress in higher mathematics and without higher mathematics we would have no modern science.

Greek science was limited by two things; its failure to appreciate the value of experimental work and its lack of powerful mathematical tools. The two are interdependent. In the long run mathematics has not developed without the directing hand of experience. The calculus was developed or invented by Newton and Leibnitz to solve problems that resulted from observation, that is, experience. In other words, the progress of pure mathematics depends upon the progress of experimental science. Not only did the Greek philosophers fail to make progress where experimentation was required directly, but they were limited in the very field which, according to their assumption, was free from any kind of experimentation—namely, mathematics.

However, we should not conclude that Greek science was a failure, far from it. Certainly the Greek philosophers have been misunderstood; sometimes they are underestimated but more often they are overestimated. Again we must not overlook the unfavorable political and economic conditions in the latter part of the golden era of Greece.

Speaking broadly, history has shown that science cannot make much progress unless it is supported by society.

Experimental science demonstrated that its success could be achieved only by adding to the Greek deductive method, that of induction. True advancement can be made only by experimenting and theorizing.

Contrary to the traditional philosophy, without sense data the human mind is limited. As a matter of fact both processes go on to some extent. Aristotle would not have assumed that a heavy object would fall to the ground sooner than a light one had he not observed that light objects like leaves and feathers do fall more slowly. Greek thinking was not balanced by practical experience; this is the weak point of Greek philosophy. The success of modern science is due to a more perfect balance between mathematical theory and experiment. Galileo succeeded, not because he was intellectually superior to the Greek philosophers or his contemporaries but rather because he had utilized a method that the Aristotelian school ignored. Unconsciously perhaps Galileo laid the foundation for a new theory of knowledge.

But the new experimental method had another far-reaching effect, it put authority in a new light. When we remember that by the time of Galileo a feeling of discontent with authority was not unusual in scientific circles, it is not surprising that the traditional view clashed with the new. The real conflict raged around fundamental methods of thinking and the place of authority. The church had leaned too

heavily upon Aristotle.

THERE are three things that made the conflict more than a life and death struggle.

1. The old distinction between the higher knowledge which was concerned with the immaterial, and the lower knowledge which was gained through experiment, merges into a distinction between things spiritual and things secular.

2. The old authority which the Greek thinkers had assumed reappears in Christian theology with a new significance. Opposition to the traditional philosophy meant opposition to the highest power on earth, the Church. A seemingly innocent experiment might deprive one not only of this mundane life but of peace in the life to come.

3. Within a comparatively short time science vindicated its position and with the enthusiasm that results from a new discovery and a little public acclaim it forged ahead. The Church, on the other hand, vainly attempted to maintain its old position but slowly retrograded.

To the immature who have a superficial knowledge of the sciences and of world conditions it is only natural that science should offer a way of escape, a road to social and economic security, but the more profound are not so credulous. Those who are intellectually honest admit that they see no solution of our most urgent problems.

The history of this conflict has been and still is a serious obstacle to the progress of religion. Indeed the intellegentsia might ask, why should we turn to man-made institutions which have substituted imitation and counterfeit for the reality of religion? Should not true religion be the cause of love and harmony rather than strife and discord?

The new spirit of inquiry affected religion in quite another way. The secondary position which the Church was forced to take as a result of its opposition to science, led to a more comprehensive study of religious customs and these researches have often proved fatal to a true understanding of religion. Some of the crudities of primitive and early worship come to us as a shock which is sometimes fatal. As James says, "The cultivator of this science [the history of religion] has to become acquainted with so many groveling and horrible superstitions that a presumption easily arises in his mind that any belief that is religious probably is false. In the 'prayerful communion' of savages with such mumbo-jumbos of dieties as they acknowledge, it is hard for us to see what genuine spiritual work—even though it were work relative only to their dark savage obligations—can possibly be done. The consequence is that the conclusions of the science of religions are as likely to be adverse as they are to be favorable to the claim that the essence of religion is true. There is a notion in the air about us that religion is probably only an anachronism, a case of 'survival', an atavistic relapse into a mode of thought which humanity in its more enlightened examples has outgrown; and this notion our religious anthropologists at present do little to counteract."[1] And so humanity may ask in

1—James: Varieties of Religious Experience, p. 490.

all seriousness, does not God work through scientific laws? Is not man's fullest development to be found through the methods of science?

THUS in every decadent period do the leaders of religion become its worst enemy. Every prophet has warned His followers of this condition in no uncertain terms.

And now we come to the real opposition of science to religion. The task in which religionists have failed has been taken up by others, and among them we find the psychologist and the mystical philosopher.

Science began by teaching that sense data was necessary for its progress, but today it has gone much farther and quite naturally.

In a narrow sense science is not concerned with religion but the individuals who carry on scientific investigations, because they are rational, intelligent beings, naturally attempt some kind of integration of all knowledge. It is not surprising nor unreasonable that some department of science should take a lively interest in some phase of religion. In this age of specialization we imagine there is less correlation of knowledge than in the past, but this is not strictly true. In the realm of intellectual pastime the extent and integration of knowledge may not be as comprehensive as formerly but, when we come to useful arts and sciences, certainly the tendency is toward a greater integration.

Even in the exact sciences like chemistry and physics, we realize that the frontiers are artificial and moreover we admit, at least some of us admit, that the phenomena which we find described in the texts and literature have not been investigated with the sole idea of increasing knowledge in some particular field. To quote a well-known physicist, "Some (phenomena) have been selected for description and research because of their practical utility, actual or foreseen; some because they are spectacular; some because they were unusual or seemed strange, or fascinated someone having the zeal and the means to study them; some because they are easy to produce and easy to measure. Others have been neglected or rejected because they are difficult to produce, or have features of such a nature as cannot be measured, or seem commonplace or dull, or thus far have failed to suggest to anyone the chance of a practical application. . . . Physics therefore is far from being a complete description of the phenomena of even a restricted field of nature. It is rather a collection of observations made because they were practicable and seemed important to various people, at various times, for various reasons."[2]

In our professional life there is necessarily an ever-increasing tendency toward specialization. Most men must confine their work to a limited field, in order to be proficient, but their technical knowledge must be broader than this one field. Even the industries are demanding a more comprehensive technical knowledge; physicists must know more chemistry, biologists must know more physics, and both must know more economics. Today as individuals and as social units our spiritual and intellectual life is toward a greater synthesis.

2—Darrow: Introduction to Contemporary Physics, p. xvi.

Both science and intuitive philosophy realize that ultimate reality and universal truth are not to be found either through mental processes or experience with external objects. There is a kind of knowledge that comes through illumination, insight or intuition; something that transcends mental activity and sense data. We cannot ignore facts. Speaking of mystical philosophy, Russell says, "There is, first, the belief in insight as against discursive analytic knowledge; the belief in a way of wisdom, sudden, penetrating, coercive, which is contrasted with the slow and fallible study of outward appearance by a science relying wholly upon the senses."[3] The first step, Russell suggests, is the feeling that beyond our daily experience there is a great mystery. Then the belief comes that reality may be found through illumination. Although he does not agree with the mystic's conclusions he does maintain that there is something to be gained from the mystical experience which could not be obtained in any other way. But while the modern philosopher realizes the beneficial result that may accrue from the moments of illumination, he is not misled like the religious mystic, by immediate experience. He distinguishes between mystical experience and the metaphysical basis of experience. To quote from Russell again, "Of the reality or unreality of the mystic's world I know nothing. I have no wish to deny it, nor even to declare that the insight which reveals it is not a genuine insight. What I do wish to maintain—and it is here that the scientific attitude becomes imperative—is that insight, untested and unsupported, is an insufficient guarantee of truth, in spite of the fact that much of the most important truth is first suggested by its means."[4]

On the other hand, Russell shows that while reason and intuition have their separate functions they are not antagonistic. "Reason is a harmonizing, controlling force rather than a creative one. Even in the most purely logical realm, it is insight that first arrives at what is new."[5]

Intuition may indicate the solution of a certain problem but it requires reason to confirm it, for immediate experience is not knowledge although it is necessary to it. Conversely if one did not use reason constantly to interpret intuition (immediate experience), he would not be able to use his intuition. That is, a meaningless experience such as a feeling of well-being, mere exaltation or depression would probably not lead to the solution of any problem. Moreover, we must remember that intuition or insight, like all human methods of acquiring knowledge, is liable to error.

The creative force of genius, then, is more akin to mystical experience than to the rational faculty.

Philosophy in its search for transcendant values has passed beyond the limitations of the mind while at the same time realizing that it is through the mind that such discoveries must be made. The quest of the philosopher is very like that of the mystic except that the philosopher realizes the function of the mind while the mystic denies its place. Neither expects to reach its goal through the aid of extant religion.

3—Russell: Mysticism and Logic, p. 8.
4—Ibid., p. 12.
5—Ibid., p. 13.

The interest of science has thus endeavored to include a field which belongs traditionally to religion, the field of values. The movement of institutionalized religion, on the other hand, has been away from the spiritual toward the secular.

When we turn to the practical side of modern mysticism the case for science is still stronger, for psychology has realized the beneficial effects of contemplation and meditation and has utilized them in the field of psychotherapy. The God of religions is tacitly ignored, but not the psychological and pathological effects resulting from belief in such a God.

HEREIN lies the real conflict between science and religion today. Science, in particular psychology, *admits all the practical results of religion but denies revelation.*

The desire for ultimate reality is not confined to any one class; indeed it is found in all walks of life, manifesting itself in various moods, never simple and never absolutely constant.

The philosopher desires a world which is not impaired by change and accident, for his premises must be something more than "highly probable." Emotions are of secondary consideration, indeed a thorough-going rational philosopher would probably try to exclude all emotion.

Those who are not entirely free from responsibility, anxiety and the frustrations of life and who are, moreover, not given to philosophical reflection, more often find consolation in any thing that will stimulate emotion and feeling. Of this class some are concerned almost wholly with "immediate experience," rather than the object of the experience, while others reflect upon the experience associating it with some object or cause. Mere "experience," psychic or private, is not in itself sufficient to warrant its continual existence, either in the individual or the group. It must be followed by dialectical developments; there must be some object for the experience, rites, images, architecture, prophet or saint. Nevertheless there are people who lay stress upon emotional reactions without reflecting upon the cause and there are times when most of us do the same. And finally we must remember that the cause assigned to such experiences may not be the real cause; it may be wholly imaginary.

Again there are the more primitive types who find protection and a sense of security solely in rites and ceremonies. They live on a blind faith in unseen forces beyond cognition and control, save through propitiation, or they put their faith in a privileged class.

As Wieman points out, there is still another type of experience which is the pastime of the thinker. It involves reflection but not much reflecting about the validity of the experience itself. Mathematicians and even physicists may be absorbed wholly in theories that are interesting within themselves but which have little relation to anything beyond this interest. They are primarily a source of esthetic enjoyment. This kind of a closed system was valued highly by the Greeks as we have indicated before. To quote Wieman, "According to Aristotle, God spent all his blissful time en-

gaged in such purely aesthetic and meaningless operations of the mind—meaningless in the sense that the judgments indicated nothing in the field of events that occur in space-time and had no application there, hence could not be used to control experience or magnify and secure the common goods of living."[6] We have all observed that an ancient cult may fascinate a certain type of mind (in spite of the fact that it is sterile) just because it is a closed system.

VERY few will fall into either class to the exclusion of the rest. The average person is a composite of all the classes. It is convenient, however, to treat the various classes as if they had independent existences, remembering that in reality they may represent moods of the same individual.

When we try to analyze religious experience all these twists and quirks of the human mind must be taken into account.

Our next problem will be to examine the validity of the claims of the philosopher and the mystic, to determine whether or not they really attain their goal and to explain their success if they are mistaken in their quest.

"Whatsoever the Creator commandeth His creatures to observe, the same must they diligently, and with the utmost joy and eagerness, arise and fulfill. They should in no wise allow their fancy to obscure their judgment, neither should they regard their own imaginings as the voice of the Eternal."[7]

6—Wieman: Religious Experience and Scientific Method, p. 337.
7—Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, p. 337.

FROM SA'DÍ'S ROSE-GARDEN

A man came unto Nawshíraván the Just, and he brought glad-tidings, saying:

"Almighty God hath taken thine enemy from off the earth."

The king answered: "Hast thou heard any rumor that He will leave me upon it?"

* * *

A disciple asked of his master: "What shall I do? For the people flock to my dwelling and leave me no peace."

His master replied: "When the poor come, lend them something; when the rich come, ask them for something. Neither will visit thee again."

Free translations by Marzieh Carpenter.

THE GIVE AWAY

WILLARD W. BEATTY

"INVEST in leisure for your old age," the recent advertisements tell us. "Take out insurance for the college education of your children."

It is what most white Americans work and plan for. Since their ancestors fought for a living with the weather and the soil of the colonies and the frontier, thrift has been one of their solid virtues, and extravagance a fault. The man who threw his money away and then asked for help has had little sympathy from the self supporting citizen.

"It's only common sense," says the white American. "How else can self respecting people get along?"

EXTRAVAGANCE WORKED

Perhaps, then, he talks with an old time Sioux and hears of a plan of life which was just the opposite. He hears of a community where the ideal was, not to be independent but to give and, later, receive gifts; where hoarding was a real sin and extravagance a sensible means of disposing of wealth. Was this also "common sense?" and "the only way to get along?" Let us look at the circumstances which enforced it.

The Sioux of old had little use for wealth. They lived a wandering life where death in war and death from hunger were daily dangers. What they needed were brave men, willing to sacrifice themselves in defending the community, and generous men, willing to share food and goods with the tribe. So they admired, not those who kept—either life or wealth —but those who gave.

For their brave men, they had a system of war honors. On certain occasions they allowed, even required them to recite their famous deeds and this was their reward, rather than any pay. For virtuous and industrious women, they had rewards similar to those of the men, but in their own field. The generous man did not recite his own deeds but he was praised by others and so highly did the community regard this praise, that men preferred it to wealth. We hear discussion in modern days as to whether the world could get along without money? Would people continue to work? A picture of an old Siouan community might help to answer this question.

APPROBATION SOUGHT

In such a community, public praise was the goal of everyone, male and female, old and young. It was no false publicity, for there were penalties for exaggerating one's exploits

even in the slightest degree. But to have one's praises sung through the camp was the aim of effort, much as it used to be for knights in old Europe. Fathers desired it for their children just as, in a money civilization, they would want them to have wealth and comfort. But a Siouan father paid out his surplus wealth to get his child honor.

That was the function of the Give Away. It was a distribution of gifts, performed at every crisis of a person's life to gain him an honorable standing or to insure recognition for the standing already gained. Thus a father would have his son named by a famous warrior and distribute gifts so that the boy would start his career with good augury. When the boy killed his first buffalo calf, there would be more gifts and honor for his deed. So with his first war party and his first scalp. And a daughter might be honored with an elk tooth dress and a sermon on virtue. This was not a mere conceited boasting, for the people so honored were expected afterward to be particularly modest and devoted to the public welfare. It was a way of rewarding their achievement and of keeping the whole community in mind of the ideals to be striven for.

SUBSTITUTE FOR CHARITY

Even if a man had no special hero to honor, he could gain public esteem by giving a feast and making gifts. Sometimes he disposed of his whole surplus in this way. It was the Siouan substitute for organized charity. And the public benefactor who made it possible was highly honored. "He was not afraid of poverty," said the Omaha, a Siouan speaking tribe, "and that is almost as great as not being afraid of the enemy." Particularly the peace chief who did not go to war, but was the shepherd and adviser of his people, was expected to be generous. Whites give great praise to the politician who leaves office a poor man, but the Siouan chief who was not poor would be suspect.

As a result of such ideals, every one gave, and no one was uncared for. It was a system of mutual support, not by dues and taxes but by constant giving, from the richer to the poorer. The person who gave instead of squandering, was investing in the goodwill of the tribe so that he in turn would receive gifts. And, with every giving, the praises of the desirable citizens were sung and the Siouan ideals emphasized.

NEED TIME TO ADJUST

Those who voiced these bewildered outcries had based their whole lives on a system of *saving*. They were bankrupt not only in money but in security, hope, a sense of the value of effort. The whole country, since then, has been concerned with working out some new economic arrangement which will fit the present circumstances and give back security to the workers. The Sioux, whose life was based on giving, have also found that their system no longer fits the circumstances. They are passing through a period of emotional insecurity. They, too, need time and thought for finding a new arrangement, which will fit the new pattern of life.

The author is Director of Education, United States Office of Indian Affairs, and this article is reprinted from the bulletin *Indian Affairs*.

THE NEW CREATION

ALICE SIMMONS COX

VIII. THE BUILDING OF THE KINGDOM

DURING these swiftly passing transition years before a permanent change is achieved in the outer realm of world conditions,—before universal and industrial peace are established, universal education a reality, science and religion functioning without prejudice or enmity as the two wings of a soaring humanity,—before God is recognized as the Ruler of things temporal and things spiritual,—all attempts on the part of humanity to bring about a better state are, in their degree, acceptable and good. In the final triumph they will be absorbed in the larger unification and the clearer understanding. Alone they would fall short of success. Nevertheless, each endeavor to establish brotherhood, each attempt to eliminate poverty, each friendly handclasp that aids another soul in its own growth, helps to clear the highway for the coming of God's Kingdom to earth.

All that is conducive to the benefit of the human race is valuable, Bahá-'u'lláh teaches, and has a place in the process of evolution. Every good grain of the past and the present is being gathered for the harvest, the tares are soon to be made ready for fire. Every hidden capacity in earth and tree and flower, in animal and man, in all of civilization, that composite of human deeds, is to be garnered, every secret brought to light, every hidden beauty of creation revealed. Art and science are in the earliest stage of a brilliant renaissance under the inspiration of God, the Fashioner, the Omniscient. All the universe, pregnant with the life of fruition, is in the throes of birth. This, because men in general are today ready to receive that measure of enlightenment from on High, which will bring all nature to the stage of maturity—humanity to its spiritual destiny, civilization to the station of the Kingdom, and the lower realms to finest cultivation and use possible for the "good earth."

To this present generation of world citizens in embryo has been entrusted the greatest mission in human history, the task of bringing the new civilization, conceived through the grace of God, to birth.

Those men of the half-light who are still seeking the Source of their illumination, will put forth their energies to check complete disaster in world affairs before the flower of hu-

man progress has been irretrievably impaired. Out of desperation, out of necessity, from motives sometimes mixed with ambition and greed, very often as the product of finely trained intellect, come their suggestions for the remedy of troubles. The human mind so stirred has framed plans for cooperative endeavors, a wide variety of plans in politics, science and religion. No one of them gains adequate support, no one arouses the necessary enthusiasm to carry it to victory. Catastrophe is, in reality, not far ahead. Futile endeavors are these save in so far as they will guide men part of the way and then because of their failure cause these men to look to the promise of salvation revealed by Bahá'u'lláh.

Souls that are under the full light of Bahá'u'lláh's guidance have before them first and foremost the supreme task of carrying His Message of hope and regeneration to mankind. This they must do, Bahá'u'lláh warns, before it is too late. While others try to hold at bay the inevitable results of international fear and hatred and of a defective system of distribution, not only of worldly goods, but of intellectual and cultural riches, the servants of Bahá'u'lláh must use the golden hours to instruct in the principles of spiritual brotherhood without which there can not be the desired security, abundance or peace. From the viewpoint of Bahá'í teachings, the greatest service a man can render in this Day to promote the general welfare is to call attention to the fundamental need of human unity in action and point to the possibilities of its realization through the power of the spirit released for men through the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh, touching the innermost desires of all souls with the spark of divine fire.

"The utterance of God is a lamp, whose light are these words: Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves of one branch. Deal ye with one another with the utmost love and harmony, with friendliness and fellowship. . . . So powerful is the light of unity that it can illuminate the whole earth. . . . Exert yourselves that ye may attain this transcendant and most sublime station, the station that can ensure the protection and security of all mankind. This goal excelleth every other goal, and this aspiration is the monarch of all aspiration. So long, however, as the thick clouds of oppression, which obscure the daystar of justice, remain undispelled, it would be difficult for the glory of this station to be unveiled to men's eyes."[1]

Where human efforts fail, the plan of God will succeed, because souls that learn to love Him through their consciousness of His Love and Knowledge as revealed to them in all its purity by a recent Prophet, become bound together by a tie that surpasses all earthly attachments and loyalties. The love that thus comes to exist in the hearts of those who love God is universal in nature, "prompted by the ideal of the unity of spirits."[2] When men find this point of similarity they are attracted to one another. When then they revolve their actions around this center they will unify civilization into a consummate, harmoniously functioning whole. Love becomes the point of attraction and concentration for emotional and intellectual faculties, the Sun of radiant energy, the

1—Gleanings from the Writings of Bahá'u'lláh, pp. 288, 289.
2—Wisdom of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, p. 160.

nuclear center of collective life.

The law of love is the highest law in the universe of God, 'Abdu'l-Bahá explains. It holds the stars in their courses in the celestial heavens, operates as attraction and repulsion in the chemical world and reveals itself in tropisms and instincts and the laws of augumentative composition in the higher realms of physical life. "Love is the law of order between simple essences. . . . Love is the essential and magnetic power that organizes the planets and stars which shine in infinite space. Love supplies the impulse to that intense and increasing meditation which reveals the hidden mysteries of the universe."

"Love is the source of greatest happiness of the material and spiritual worlds. . . . That love is the light of the Kingdom."[4]

THE gift of Divine Revelation to this cycle of progress has been exceedingly bountiful, including, as does Revelation in whatever era, an unveiling of spiritual law and a proclamation of certain commands for the conduct of affairs; but in this age it has unfolded in greater plenitude than ever before the secrets of life, together with a wide program for world rehabilitation and development. Through spiritual education such as this the Kingdom of God is setting up its foundations in human souls, and then with the additional knowledge of Bahá'u'lláh's plan for a new world order the Kingdom will appear in the substance of civilization, as a replica of heaven on earth. Through promulgation of Bahá'í teachings and the establishment of Bahá'í community life men are enabled now to begin building the new order even before the wisdom of every divine instruction is perfectly clear. Such is the favor of God's guidance to those who do not wish to err from His way.

The Divine Word of this age gives basic instructions for the appointment of authoritative interpreters of its meaning, for the formation of a representative international state, federated and with police force, and for universal disarmament. It calls for universal education, a universal calendar and auxiliary language, and for administrative unity in matters of common welfare. It points to the abolition of tariff walls, inauguration of cooperative profit-sharing, the just use of income and inheritance taxes, and methods of mutual aid in agricultural communities as the requisites for solution of the world economic problem. No one scheme, however well carried out, can succeed alone, Bahá'u'lláh declares. Concerted effort and coordination of all underlying principles involved, such as unity and justice, democracy and degree of capacity, authority and individual freedom, spiritual passion and moderation can eventually bring success.

The New World Order of Bahá'u'lláh will serve two correlative purposes. It will, first, be a way of expression for all who have found the Spirit of this age, a definite right way of living in which the souls of men find fulfillment of capacities hitherto dormant. This expression must include, primarily, the faithful service owed to other men, and therefore it will be a second function of the new

4—Bahá'í Scriptures, par. 790.

order to provide the avenue through which already illumined men and women may so improve the physical and educational environment for all men that further world progress is assured. Science will free humanity from drudgery, poverty and starvation when rightly directed; government will free nations from isolation, insecurity and war when acting for the good of all; education will free man from the dominance of his animal nature and enable him to develop all the resources of his own being when that education is moral and spiritual as well as physical and mental in scope.

It is more true of the dawning era than of any dispensation of the past that the civilization built by a people will be the form through which religious ideals will find expression. Ritual and ceremony are negligible in Bahá'í worship of God. Chiefly in deeds inspired by meditation and prayer must be the sign of inner reverence and worth. As civilization is the sum of community life, it must bear testimony in this age to the spiritual vitality of the controlling majority of men. In the arts and sciences, in fields of educational endeavor, in the living fabric of the social commonwealth will men sing their praises to their King. The Kingdom of God when it is established will be the effect of the Cause of Bahá'u'lláh, the exact result of spiritual illumination and obedience. As such a manifestation of the Divine Spirit which has renewed the hearts of men, it could no more be stayed than the sun in its course, unless God so willed. It is God's plan, Bahá'u'lláh proclaims, that civilization the world around be renewed and re-adorned.

Paralleling the establishment of the new world commonwealth will come the full revelation to men of the deep inner unity of the human soul, which can never be destroyed, but which will know the happiness of eternal life only when the conflicting desires that divide its conscious existence find integration, knowledge and peace in service to humanity. Such service is the Will of God for men who love Him. Attainment unto the station of spiritual enlightenment, for which by creation men are destined and for which God called all creation into being, is possible for all peoples in this dispensation as each soul brings itself into inspired, cooperative world citizenship—the acme of service in the Kingdom of God.

Such is the Divine favor in this Day of Days that one sincere act of devotion in Bahá'u'lláh's way brings always a recompense in soul illumination far exceeding the degree of effort put forth. The same truth of individual progress is manifest in the wider realm of social evolution. Civilization, as well as individuals, stands one step from the top of the stairs. Every rise attained by humanity in past centuries has contributed to the present state of development and made it possible for these heirs of material and spiritual progress to step up into the Sunlight of God's ultimate purpose for humanity. Although men of this Day must meet the supreme test of understanding and absolute obedience, their pilgrimage to the Promised Land is being condensed

into the span of a human life, and their reward on earth is one not granted to earlier peoples. To Bahá-'u'lláh's servants will come the incomparable joy of interdependent activity with a world of other illumined souls. What great ecstasy this is the radiant persons of the new age will know. What effulgence of divine inspiration this will bring into the legislative, judicial and administrative councils of men and into the channels of individual endeavor men are not quite yet capable of conceiving. Soon however, "will the present-day order be rolled up, and a new one spread out in its stead."[5] Then, under the Light of God, will man see and know the true beauty and dignity of the station conferred upon him by His Creator.

"In the world of being," states 'Abdu'l-Bahá, "the hand of Divine power hath firmly laid the foundations of this all highest bounty, and this wondrous gift. Whatsoever is latent in the innermost of this holy cycle shall gradually appear and be made manifest for now is the beginning of its growth and the day-spring of the revelation of its signs. Ere the close of this century and of this age, it shall be made clear and evident how wondrous was that spring-tide, and how heavenly was that gift."[6]

Concluded

5—Gleanings, p. 7.
6—Quoted in "Unfoldment of World Civilization," p. 45.